



## US Army Chaplain

Rev. Andrew & Michelle Spriensma

### Sovereign Surprises

I am once again deployed to the Middle East. I have assumed the same role that I had about a year ago, primarily travelling around the battlespace and visiting the soldiers of our task force stationed on numerous small outposts, providing pastoral care and counselling, and leading them in worship. After a few days, I move on to the next location, trying to visit about two or three bases a week before returning to my headquarters to lead Sunday services and refit for the next week.

One of the most effective means of engaging soldiers during a visit is to walk the perimeter and talk with the Soldiers individually while they are on lonely guard duty in the towers. This past week I met a young soldier who was in his first year of military service. He had come from a Christian home, but left the home and the faith, and moved in with a girl he had met. The relationship was in rough shape, and he was wondering what to do when he returned home. We talked for a while until his shift ended and another Soldier came to take his position. I prayed with him and headed to another tower, wondering and still praying that he would turn back to Jesus. He caught me the evening prior to my departure, and told me he finally acknowledged his sin, was resolved to end the relationship, restore the one with his family, and place his



faith in Christ again. It is amazing to see God's providence at work arranging encounters like these. I had a senior Reformed chaplain who called these "sovereign surprises."

Here is another sovereign surprise. Right before deployment, an URC elder contacted me while trying to locate audio bibles on an MP3 thumb stick for the soldiers

from his church to listen to while deployed. While travelling into theater, I found a dusty stash of these audio bibles in a cupboard at one of the bases I visited. I shipped him some, and then started passing them out to my own soldiers. The idea grew, and several more soldiers have requested them. We now have a growing group of men who are committed to listening through the entire New Testament during the deployment and holding each other accountable to that goal!

I am scheduled to return home in the beginning of August. Until then, please pray for the Lord to continually open doors for gospel ministry here among the soldiers. Pray for the Spirit to attend to the Word with power so that lives would be transformed, and Soldiers would return home closer to Jesus than ever before. I covet your prayers also for my family as we are separated from one another during this time.

Grace and Peace,

Chaplain  
Andrew Spriensma

